

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Air Quality

SITUATION REPORT

AIR QUALITY ADVISORY

Aleutian Southwest Alaska #2017-01

LOCATION(S) IMPACTED: Southwest section of Unalaska Island near Umnak Pass in the Aleutian Islands.

VALID TIME: Friday, January 20, 2017, 1:30 PM

TIME/DATE OF THE NEXT REPORT: If necessary Saturday, January 21, 2017, 10:00 AM or if conditions change significantly and warrant a timelier advisory.

ADVISORY: Winds are from the northwest and will vary between west and northwest over the next 18 hours. Any ash from Bogoslof Volcano will travel to the southeast to south. Trace to minor amounts of volcanic ash from eruptions of the Bogoslof Volcano are possible in areas east of Umnak Pass on the southwest portion of Unalaska Island. Should enough ash fall to cover the ground, the possibility of health risks still continues from the ash on the ground any time winds or human activity can cause ash to be re-entrained into the air. People with respiratory conditions should be aware for the potential of ash fall in their area, and to use caution if it is observed.

VOLCANIC DUST AND PUBLIC IMPACT: Ash fall restricts visibility, and is a general nuisance. Individuals exposed to airborne volcanic ash may experience various eye, nose and throat irritation. Although ash can cause discomfort, short-term breathing of volcanic ash is not known to pose a significant health hazard for healthy individuals. However, exposure to ash can make breathing difficult for infants, the elderly and those with respiratory ailments. People with existing respiratory conditions, such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema and asthma, are more at risk for developing acute respiratory symptoms from breathing volcanic ash. Anyone in these risk groups should be particularly careful to avoid exposure. Contact your health provider if you are concerned about symptoms.

DEC advises everyone to avoid unnecessary exposure to ash. Wear a disposable face mask outdoors to reduce inhalation of ash particles. Dust masks can be purchased at most hardware stores. Masks that seal to the face provide the best protection. Alternatively, a wet cloth or bandana placed over the mouth and nose can help reduce contact.

Contact lens wearers are advised to switch to eye glasses to reduce eye irritation from ash exposure. Wearing goggles can help to protect your eyes and wearing long sleeved shirts as well as gloves may be helpful. Remember that pets are also susceptible to all of these same symptoms, and should be kept indoors or sheltered from ash fall as well.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please visit the Alaska Volcano Observatory website at <http://www.avo.alaska.edu>

For more information on steps to take in the event of ashfall, visit the Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Quality Division, Volcanic Ashfall page at <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/volcano.htm>.

Sign up to automatically receive Air Quality Alerts via email or Twitter at:

<http://dec.alaska.gov/Applications/Air/airtoolsweb/Home/Index>

For information on this advisory, contact Mark Smith, Division of Air Quality, (907) 269-7676 or State Cell Phone (907) 748-2142.